



Australian Institute
of Landscape Architects

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Accreditation Standards and Procedures

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PREAMBLE

About AILA

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities and greater environmental stewardship. AILA provides over 2,000 members (and growing) based in urban and rural Australia, and overseas with training, recognition and a community of practice to share knowledge, ideas and action. AILA anticipates and develops a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, AILA works to improve the design, planning and management of the natural and built environment. www.aila.org.au

Values

To achieve AILA's mission, the values that underpin the accreditation program include:

- Hold itself to high standards and ethical behaviour;
- Uphold the standards it establishes in a non-punitive manner;
- Support diversity in all its many forms;
- Promote self-examination and self-analysis of Programs and curriculum;
- Aspire to achieve educational excellence as a precursor to professional excellence; and
- Encourage education that prepares students to succeed in a changing world.

AILA's Position on Education

AILA supports the advancement of landscape architecture through education. The profession's knowledge base plays an essential role in protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public and the natural environment.

Landscape architects' professional knowledge and skills are attained, developed, and nurtured over a life-long learning continuum, including both formal and informal endeavours. Supporting the learning objectives of landscape architects throughout that continuum is crucial to the profession. As such, AILA supports the development of research and continuing education initiatives that enable practitioners to address the evolving challenges of practice.

An academically and professionally diverse range of tertiary-level Programs¹ contributes greatly to the development and dissemination of knowledge, skills and insight. Encouraging excellence and diversity in the student population is essential to ensuring a source of new energy, ideas, perceptions and scrutiny regarding the profession and its ongoing social responsibilities. Academic exploration is essential to the vitality of the profession.

AILA's Position on Accreditation

AILA encourages programs offering landscape architecture to offer a high quality academic education, thus enhancing the body of knowledge, strengthening the profession and helping the profession meet the emerging challenges through the application of accreditation standards in the context of each individual university's mission and vision. AILA has a commitment to deliver a fair and transparent accreditation process that recognizes and embraces the diversity and context of the each university program. Recognising that "landscape architecture is a distinct profession requiring education at a university level that addresses a recognized body of knowledge at a high level"², AILA encourages a diversity of programs underpinned by distinctiveness of philosophical approach and vision, provided that they address the ambit of AILA's *Strategic Plan* and the *Australian Landscape Charter*.

¹ Refer to the *Definitions, Interpretation & Application* section for further explanation

² IFLA, *Accreditation Guidelines*, [approved June 2008, revised January 2004], p.1

The mission of AILA regarding accreditation is to evaluate, advocate for and advance the quality of landscape architecture education across all universities.

AILA's Position on Research

AILA encourages the undertaking of high quality research in the field of landscape architecture. Research includes diverse types of inquiry including: disciplinary and multidisciplinary; applied and theoretical. AILA supports intellectual activities that generate new knowledge, produce and disseminate such work and apply advanced approaches and technology to current and emerging areas of practice. AILA supports the appropriate inclusion of relevant information, concepts and methods from arts, sciences, and humanities to strengthen the profession.

National Education Committee

AILA has a standing National Education Committee (NEC), to oversee the policy development and process regarding accreditation. The NEC reports directly to the AILA National Council. The full terms of reference for the NEC can be found at www.aila.org.au. Landscape Architecture accreditation standards and procedures are to be reviewed by the AILA NEC every five years at a minimum. The Community of Interest (see below) will have a minimum of thirty days to comment on any proposed revisions.

NEC Membership

The following make-up of the Committee is:

- A minimum of one National Councillor;
- 14-16 Committee members consisting of a mix of practitioners, academics and possibly a student of landscape architecture;
- A nominated representative (preferably the Program Director) from each of the landscape architecture Programs being offered at universities around Australia;
- With the exception of the CEO, Committee member's terms of appointment shall be two years, with the possibility of an extension (for another 2 year term);
- There is the option of appointing a 'guest advisor' to the Committee for a period of 12 months; and
- The Chair shall be elected by the Committee annually and ratified by National Council.

Academic Quality

AILA accredited Programs must maintain and monitor, and strive to advance, academic quality within their Program and their university, having regard to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF). "Academic quality" at its most basic definition is that the Program satisfies (meets or exceeds) student and professional expectations. However, the Program must reflect the university's mission, thus providing diversity amongst Programs and fostering innovation in teaching, practice, research and service. Each Program must have specific processes to determine if its quality standards are being met. This evaluation must be on-going and forward-thinking. In addition to student achievements, academic quality is also indicated by high standards of teaching, research and service. The goals and results of these activities should reflect both the university mission and the current aspirations of the profession of landscape architecture.

Community of Interest

Before adopting or revising any accreditation standard, AILA commits to consulting with the following "Community of Interest" through the NEC:

- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA);
- All Accredited Landscape Architecture Programs in Australia and New Zealand;
- All tertiary university Programs currently considering accreditation;

- All tertiary university Programs previously holding accredited status;
- AILA State Chapters;
- AILA Members;
- AILA Student representatives;
- New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architecture (NZILA); and
- The International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA).

The members of the above "Community of Interest" may be reviewed and amended by the AILA NEC, in consultation with all currently Accredited Landscape Architecture Programs in Australia and New Zealand at the time, if/as required.

Definitions, Interpretation & Application

Academic Staff member – a person engaged by the university to provide academic services as a full-time or part-time employee, or under contract for specific services.

Accreditation – A voluntary process of peer review designed to evaluate tertiary university Programs based on their own stated objectives and the accreditation standards.

Assessment – Each criterion has one or more questions that seek qualitative and quantitative evidence used to assess the level of compliance with, or achievement of, the related criteria.

Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) – The Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training, as established by the Australian Qualifications Framework Council.

Compliance – Achieved when the NEC concludes, after review of relevant indicators or other evidence, that a standard is “met” or “met with recommendation(s)” as defined below. To achieve accreditation a Program must demonstrate to the NEC, through the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), site visit and technical accuracy review of the Visiting Team Report that it complies with the Standards.

Course – is a discrete component within a broader syllabus or curriculum. It typically focuses on one subject or area of specialisation, at a given level and is generally undertaken over the period of a single semester or term. Note: some universities refer to this component of a broader syllabus as a ‘Unit’.

Criteria – Each standard has one or more criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard. Not satisfying a criterion does not automatically lead to an assessment of a standard as “not met”. To be accredited, a Program must demonstrate progress towards meeting the criteria. Criteria are identified by letters (eg, **A. Program Mission**) in this document.

First Professional Degree Program – A First Professional Degree Program encompasses the body of knowledge common to the profession, and promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to enter the professional practice of landscape architecture:

- an AQF 8 compliant bachelor Honours qualification in a context enriched by the liberal arts and natural and social sciences; or
- an AQF 9 compliant master’s coursework qualification by providing instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.

Intent – Explains the purpose of the standard.

National Accreditation Visiting Team (NART) – An accreditation review team of representatives appointed by the NEC that visits a Program in accordance with these *Accreditation Standards and Procedures*.

National Education Committee (NEC) – AILA’s National Education Committee, a standing committee of AILA responsible for the implementation of AILA’s *Accreditation Standards and Procedures*.

Program – An inclusive term for the coursework and other learning experiences leading to a qualification, and the supporting administration, academic staff, facilities and services which sponsor and provide those experiences. Note: some universities refer to this inclusive concept using separate terms and they may use the term ‘Course’ for the academic component of a Program as defined herein and in contradiction to the definition for the same term as described above.

Program Director – is the person with the overall responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the Program.

Recommendation affecting Accreditation – Are issues of serious concern, directly affecting the quality of the Program. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation are only made when the Visiting Team assesses a Standard as “met with recommendation(s)” or “not met”. Recommendations are derived from the identified areas of weakness in meeting a Standard that are described in the rationale sections of the Visiting Team Report. The Program Director is required to report progress regularly on these issues. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation identify issues and do not prescribe solutions.

Self Evaluation Report (SER) – is completed by the Program Director prior to an Accreditation visit.

Standards – Qualitative statements of the essential conditions an accredited Program must meet as comprising Standards 1-7 set out below. A Program must demonstrate adequate evidence of compliance with all Standards to achieve and maintain accreditation.

Shall – is defined as mandatory.

Should – is defined as prescriptive.

Will – is defined as prescriptive.

Suggestions for Improvement – Areas where the Program can build on a strength or address an area of concern that does not directly affect accreditation at the time of the review.

Minimum Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Accredited Status

1. The Program nomenclature and degree description incorporate the term "Landscape Architecture".
2. A First Professional Degree Program of at least four academic years' duration culminating in AQF8 compliance as the minimum requirement, or
A postgraduate First Professional Degree Program of at least two academic year's duration, is a coursework program, has a cognate entry pre-requisite, and is AQF 9 compliant as the minimum requirements. As such, a graduate Masters Program of three years' duration is acceptable.
3. Qualified Landscape Architecture academic staff of sufficient number and appointed at levels

appropriate to meet the needs of student numbers.

4. There is a designated Program Director/Administrator responsible for the leadership and management functions for the Program under review.
5. A Program accredited by AILA shall:
 - a. Continuously comply with these Accreditation Standards;
 - b. Pay the annual sustaining and other fees as required; and
 - c. Regularly lodge an Annual Report and other requested reports.

The Program Director/Administrator shall inform AILA if any of these factors fails to apply during an accreditation period. The Program Director/Administrator is responsible for reporting any substantive changes required to the Program through the Annual Report and overall accreditation process when they occur. Substantive changes would be those that may affect the accreditation status of the Program.

STANDARDS

The following seven sections of this document (described as 'Standards') set out what AILA considers to be the essential conditions a Program must meet to gain or continue their accreditation. In structuring their Self-Evaluation Report (SER) prior to the Visiting Team visit, Programs will be able to describe and provide evidence of how they comply with these Standards to achieve accreditation.

Following the title of each Standard, there is a statement clarifying it and a statement of what the Standard intends to measure. This is followed by a number of sub-categories and assessment questions to assist Programs in preparing their SER. The Self-Evaluation Report template accompanies this *Accreditation Standards and Procedures* document and provides the outline for Programs to use in preparing their SER.

Standard 1: Program Mission & Objectives

The Programs shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

***INTENT:** Using a clear concise mission statement, each landscape architecture Program should define its core values and fundamental purpose for academic staff, students, prospective students and the educational university within which it resides. The mission statement summarizes why the Program exists and the needs that it seeks to fulfil. It also provides a benchmark for assessing how well the Program meets, and is meeting the stated objectives.*

A. Program Mission. The mission statement expresses the underlying purposes, values and distinctiveness of the Program.

Assessment: Does the Program have a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the Program and does it relate to the university's mission statement?

B. Education Goals & Objectives. Clearly defined and formally stated academic goals should reflect the mission and demonstrate that attainment of the goals will fulfil the Program mission, while the Learning Outcomes specifically describe how each of the academic goals will be achieved.

Assessment 1: Does the Program have an effective procedure to determine progress in meeting its goals and is it used regularly?

Assessment 2: Does the Program have clearly defined and achievable Learning Outcomes that describe how the goals will be met?

C. Program Aspirations: Opportunities & Risks. Indication that the Program is engaged in a long-range (3-5 years as a minimum) planning process.

Assessment: Does the long-range process as presented in the Self Evaluation-Report, describe the Program's mission and objectives will be met, documents the university's and Program's review and evaluation processes, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and discusses external and university internal matters that may impact upon the Program's operation?

D. Program Disclosure. Program literature, website and promotional media accurately describe

the Program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status.

Assessment: Is the Program information accurate?

Standard 2: Program Autonomy, Governance & Administration

The Program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

INTENT: *Landscape Architecture should be recognised as a discrete professional Program with sufficient financial and university support and authority to enable achievement of the stated Program mission, goals and objectives.*

A. Program Administration. Landscape Architecture is administered as an identifiable and discrete program within the university.

Assessment 1: Is the Program seen as a discrete and identifiable Program within the university?

Assessment 2: Does the Program Director / Administrator hold an academic appointment in landscape architecture?

Assessment 3: Does the Program Director / Administrator exercise the leadership and management functions of the Program?

B. University Support. The university provides sufficient resources to enable the Program to achieve its mission and goals, and support individual academic staff development and advancement.

Assessment 1: Are staff to student ratios in the courses appropriate for delivering the Program?

Assessment 2: Is funding available to assist full-time and part-time academic staff with continued professional development including support in developing funded grants, attendance at conferences, computers and appropriate software, other types of equipment and technical support? What is considered 'normal' in your university and is this considered adequate for the Program?

Assessment 3: Is there adequate provision of technical and professional staff to support the Program in accomplishing its mission, goals and objectives?

C. Commitment to Diversity. The Program demonstrates commitment to diversity through its recruitment and retention of academic staff and students.

Assessment: How does the Program demonstrate its commitment to diversity in the recruitment and retention of students and academic staff?

D. Academic Staff Participation. The academic staff participate in Program governance and administration.

Assessment 1: Do the academic staff make recommendations on the allocation of resources and do they have the responsibility to develop, implement, evaluate and modify the Program's curriculum and operating practices?

Assessment 2: Do the academic staff participate, in accordance with university guidelines, in developing criteria and procedures for annual evaluation and academic promotion?

Assessment 3: Does the Program or university adequately communicate and mentor academic staff regarding policies, expectations and procedures for annual evaluations and for promotion to all ranks?

E. Academic Staffing. The academic staff shall be of a sufficient number to accomplish the Program's goals and objectives, to teach the curriculum, to support students through advising and other functions, to engage in research, creative activity and scholarship and to be actively involved in professional endeavours such as presenting at conferences.

Assessment: Does the university ensure adequacy of the number of academic staff sufficient to enable the Program's operation and fulfilment of the Program's goals and objectives?

Standard 3: Professional Curriculum

The First Professional Degree curriculum shall include the core knowledge skills and applications of landscape architecture.

- a. In addition to the professional curriculum, a First Professional Degree Program at the Bachelor's level shall provide an educational context enriched by other disciplines, including but not limited to: design and planning; liberal and fine arts; natural sciences; and social sciences, as well as opportunities for students to explore other areas of interest.
- b. In addition to the professional curriculum, a First Professional Degree at the Master's coursework level shall provide instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.

INTENT: The purpose of the curriculum is to achieve the Learning Outcomes stated in the Program's mission and objectives. Curriculum objectives should relate to the Program's mission and specific learning outcomes. The Program's curriculum should encompass coursework and other opportunities intended to develop students' knowledge, skills and abilities in landscape architecture.

A. Mission & Objectives. The Program's curriculum addresses its mission, goals, and objectives.

Assessment: Does the Program identify the knowledge, skills, abilities and values it expects students to possess at graduation?

B. Professional Curriculum. The Program's curriculum includes coverage of these key areas of knowledge and skills:

Design and Methods

Process, planning/master planning, diverse cultural and environmental understanding, communication including digital applications, exploration and fabrication.

Environment

Natural, cultural, geographical, and land management systems, ecology (made/natural), constructed ecologies/green infrastructure, living landscapes, water/ecosystem services, sustainability and resilience, plant & soil science including knowledge of plant species.

History and Theory (interrogation and exploration)

Precedents, history of landscape architecture, cultural heritage, environmental history and theory, broad understanding, interrogation/critique, research and research methods, interdisciplinary studies.

Technology and Construction

Landform manipulation (grading), materials and structures, plant and soil science, site planning.

Professional Practice and Ethics

Ethics and professionalism, legal/cultural frameworks, implementation methods, stewardship, public policy and regulation.

Communication and Collaboration

Written, verbal and visual, computer applications and other advanced technology.

Assessment 1: Does the curriculum address the designated subject matter in a logical or appropriate pedagogical sequence that supports the Program's goals and objectives?

Assessment 2: Does student output demonstrate that the curriculum is providing students with the appropriate content to enter the landscape architecture profession?

Assessment 3: Do curriculum and Program opportunities enable students to pursue academic interests consistent with university requirements and entry into the landscape architecture profession?

C. Course Outlines. Course outlines and other readily accessible sources of information for enrolled students are maintained for each individual course.

Assessment 1: Do course outlines include educational objectives, course content and the criteria and methods that will be used to evaluate student performance?

Assessment 2: Do course outlines identify the various levels of accomplishment students shall achieve to successfully complete the course and advance in the curriculum?

D. Curriculum Evaluation. At the course and curriculum levels, the Program evaluates how effectively the curriculum is helping students achieve the Program's Learning Outcomes in a timely way.

Assessment 1: Does the Program demonstrate and document ways of:

- a. Assessing students' achievement of Program objectives in the length of time to graduation stated by the Program?*
- b. Reviewing and improving the effectiveness of instructional methods in curriculum delivery?*
- c. Maintaining currency with evolving technologies, methodologies, theories and values of the profession?*

Assessment 2: Do students participate in evaluation of the Program and curriculum?

E. Augmentation of Formal Educational Experience. The Program provides opportunities for students to participate in internships, off-campus studies, research assistantships and or work experiences wherever possible.

Assessment 1: How does the Program facilitate these opportunities?

Assessment 2: How does the Program identify the objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of these opportunities?

Assessment 3: Do students report on these experiences to their peers? If so, how?

F. Coursework (AQF 8 Bachelor Honours qualifications). In addition to the professional curriculum, students also pursue coursework in other disciplines in accordance with university and Program requirements.

Assessment: Do students enrol in courses in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences or other disciplines?

G. Areas of Interest (AQF 8 Bachelor qualifications). The Program provides opportunities for students to pursue special interests.

Assessment 1: Does the Program provide opportunities for students to pursue independent projects, focused electives, optional studios, travel-integrated study, certificates, minors, etc.

Assessment 2: Does student work incorporate academic experiences reflecting a variety of pursuits beyond the core Program curriculum?

H. Research/Scholarly Methods (AQF 9 Master qualifications). The Program provides an introduction to research and scholarly methods.

Assessment 1: Does the curriculum provide an introduction to research and scholarly methods and their relation to the profession of landscape architecture?

Assessment 2: Does the Program demonstrate that theses or terminal projects exhibit creative and independent thinking and contain a significant research/scholarly component?

Standard 4: Student and Program Outcomes.

The Program shall prepare students to pursue careers in landscape architecture.

INTENT: *Students should be prepared to pursue a career in landscape architecture upon graduation. Students should have sufficient demonstrated knowledge and skills in creative problem solving, critical thinking, communications, design and organization to allow them to enter the profession of landscape architecture.*

A. Student Learning Outcomes. Upon completion of the Program, students are qualified to pursue a career in landscape architecture.

Assessment 1: Does student work demonstrate the competency required for entry-level positions in the profession of landscape architecture?

Assessment 2: Do students demonstrate their achievement of the Program's Learning Outcomes, including critical and creative thinking and their ability to understand, apply and communicate the subject matter of the professional curriculum as evidenced through project definition, problem identification, information collection, analysis, synthesis, conceptualisation and implementation?

B. Student Mentoring. The Program provides students with effective direction and mentoring throughout their enrolment.

Assessment 1: Are students aware of professional opportunities, registration, professional development, advanced educational opportunities and continuing education requirements associated with professional practice?

Assessment 2: How satisfied are students with academic experiences and their preparation for the landscape architecture profession?

C. Participation in Extra Curricular Activities. Students are encouraged and have the opportunity to participate in professional activities, university and community service.

Assessment 1: Do students participate in university organisations, community initiatives, and/or other activities?

Assessment 2: Do students participate in events such as ALLA events and the activities of other professional organisations or special interest groups?

Assessment 3: Do students have opportunities for domestic/international exchange, volunteer work, field work etc?

Standard 5: Academic Staff

The qualifications, academic position and professional activities of academic staff and associated instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and objectives of the Program.

INTENT: *The Program should have qualified experienced academic staff, both full-time and part-time, to instil the knowledge, skills and abilities that students will need to pursue a career in landscape architecture. Staff workloads, compensation and overall support received for career development should be recognised as contributing to the success of the Program.*

A. Credentials. The qualifications of the academic staff, associated instructional personnel, and teaching assistants are appropriate to their roles.

Assessment 1: Do the academic staff, collectively, have a balance of professional practice and academic experience appropriate to the Program mission?

Assessment 2: Are teaching assignments appropriate to the course content and Program mission?

Assessment 3: Are academic staff qualifications appropriate to responsibilities of the individual staff within the Program as defined by the educational university?

B. Academic Staff Development. Academic staff are engaged in activities leading to their professional growth and advancement, the advancement of the profession, and the effectiveness of the Program.

Assessment 1: Are academic staff activities, such as scholarly inquiry, research, professional practice and service to the profession, university and community documented and disseminated through appropriate media such as journals, professional magazines, community and university media?

Assessment 2: Do the teaching and administrative assignments of academic staff allow sufficient opportunity to pursue advancement and professional development?

Assessment 3: Is the development and teaching effectiveness of full-time and part-time academic staff systematically evaluated? If yes, are the results used for individual and Program improvement?

Assessment 4: Do academic staff seek and make effective use of available funding for conference attendance, equipment and technical support, etc.?

Assessment 6: Do academic staff participate in university and professional service, student mentoring and other activities that enhance the effectiveness of the Program?

Standard 6: Outreach to the University, Communities, Alumni and Practice

The Program shall have a record or plan of achievement for interacting with the professional community, its alumni, the university and the public at large.

INTENT: *The Program should establish an effective relationship with the university, communities, alumni, practitioners and the public at large in order to provide a source of community-based opportunities for students, scholarly development for academic staff, and professional guidance and financial support. Documentation and dissemination of successful outreach efforts should enhance the image of the Program and educate its constituencies regarding the Program and the profession of landscape architecture.*

A. Interaction with the Profession, Allied Professions, University & Public. The Program represents and advocates for the profession by interacting with the landscape architecture and allied professional community, the university, community and the public at large.

Assessment 1: How are outreach activities incorporated into the curriculum?

Assessment 2: How are service activities of academic staff and students documented on a regular basis?

B. Alumni and Practitioners. The Program recognises alumni and practitioners as a resource.

Assessment 1: Does the Program maintain a current registry of alumni that includes information pertaining to current employment, and significant professional accomplishments?

Assessment 2: Does the Program engage alumni and practitioners in activities such as a formal Advisory Board, student career advice, potential employment, curriculum review and development, fundraising, continuing education, etc?

Standard 7: Facilities, Equipment & Technology

Academic Staff, students and associated staff shall have access to facilities, equipment, library and other technologies necessary for achieving the Program's mission and objectives.

***INTENT:** The Program should occupy space in a designated, OH&S compliant facility that supports the achievement of Program mission and objectives. Students, academic, and associated staff should have the required tools and facilities to enable achievement of the Program mission and objectives.*

A. Facilities. There are designated, OH&S compliant, adequately maintained spaces that serve the professional requirements of the academic staff, students and associated staff.

Assessment 1: Are academic and administrative staff provided with appropriate office space?

Assessment 2: Are students assigned facilities and resources adequate to meet the Program's needs? Is there adequate access to studio spaces, computer labs and support services, eg printing?

B. Information Systems and Technical Equipment. Information systems and technical equipment, as needed to achieve the Program's mission and objectives, are available to students, academic staff and associated staff.

Assessment 1: Does the Program have sufficient access to computer equipment and software?

Assessment 2: Is the frequency of hardware and software maintenance, updating and replacement sufficient to meet the needs of the Program?

Assessment 3: Do Information Systems support services hours of access sufficient to adequately serve academic staff and students?

C. Library Resources and Services. Library collections, online resources and other services are sufficient to support the Program's mission and educational objectives.

Assessment 1: Are library collections adequate to support the Program?

Assessment 2: Do the courses effectively integrate library and other resources?

Assessment 3: Are the library hours of operation convenient and adequate to serve the needs of academic staff and students?

D. Anticipated Future Needs. Does the Program have a long-term plan for their requirements for facilities, equipment and technology that allows for Program expansion?

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Initiating Accreditation

A Program can apply for accreditation whenever it meets the Minimum Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Accredited Status and has had at least one graduating class.

The Program should notify AILA of its intention to apply for accreditation at least four months before an anticipated visit.

The accreditation process is the same whether a Program is applying for renewal of accreditation or is seeking Preliminary Accreditation.

Cancellation of Application for Accreditation

At any time before AILA has commenced the accreditation process administration, a university may cancel its application for accreditation by notifying in writing to the AILA NEC Chair. In these circumstances, AILA will not refund fees paid by the university.

Preliminary Accreditation

If a university proposes offering a new First-Professional Program in Landscape Architecture, it can seek Preliminary Accreditation. This would normally occur at an early stage in the planning or development of a Program, typically just before implementation.

Preliminary Accreditation of a proposed new Program is conducted at the invitation of the university.

Preliminary Accreditation provides an assessment of a program prior to a full post-first-graduate accreditation visit. The Preliminary Accreditation Visiting Team's report states whether the content, structure and resources of a proposed new Program can satisfy the Standards required for accreditation. The Visiting Team may make a recommendation for accreditation of a Program for a period up until immediately prior to the first cohort of students graduating.

Where Preliminary Accreditation is granted, the Program needs to use the term 'preliminary accredited' in its literature, accompanied by the following explanatory note:

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) supports the advancement of landscape architecture through accreditation of university programs. More information can be found at [aila.org.au](http://www.aila.org.au) (hyperlink to http://www.aila.org.au/imis_prod/AILAWeb/AILA_Accredited_Universities.aspx) The [name of university] program has received preliminary accreditation by AILA. Full accreditation will be sought in [date] corresponding with the graduation of the first student cohort.

This term should remain until such time as a full accreditation process occurs.

If a Program proposes a new compliant qualification, in addition to an existing AILA-accredited qualification, it may apply to the NEC with the below information for the additional qualification to be accredited, and the NEC can determine whether a full NART visit is necessary in granting Preliminary Accreditation.

The documentation that is required to be submitted to the NEC for Preliminary Accreditation, in addition to the relevant content of the SER, includes: a rationale of the proposed Program, including mission, aims and objectives and proposed Learning Outcomes; a description of the proposed Program including Program structure, the Program rules and requirements for its completion, and syllabi detail including content and contact hours for all units of study; and a description of human and physical resources required and proposed to support the proposed Program .

Self-Evaluation Report

All Programs applying for accreditation shall prepare a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) following the required AILA format. The SER describes the Program's mission and objectives, its self-assessment and future plans; provides a detailed response to the recommendations of the previous National Accreditation Review Team and details the Program's compliance with each accreditation Standard. It is important that academic staff, university administrators and students participate in preparing the Self-Evaluation Report. The SER must include a statement explaining the participation of each group. The AILA NEC notifies each Program of the accreditation schedule and deadlines.

Since accreditation is a voluntary process, AILA cannot conduct a review without an invitation or written notice of approval from the university. This invitation and notice of preferred visit dates must be submitted at least four months prior to the review.

At least 30 business days before the visit, the Program shall submit an electronic copy of the SER to AILA, who will provide copies to the Visiting Team. If the documents are not submitted by this deadline, the Program may be notified that the Accreditation visit has been postponed.

The Program should confirm with the AILA National Office the costs for which they are responsible related to the NART visit.

Information provided in the SER is to be regarded as commercial-in-confidence unless already publically available (eg through web-site and other media).

National Accreditation Review Team (NART)

AILA NEC maintains the National Accreditation Review Team (NART). Each Visiting Team is selected from the NART. There are three main categories of NART membership:

1. **Landscape Architecture Academics** who hold a first-professional degree in Landscape Architecture, and teach in an accredited Program;
2. **Practicing Landscape Architects** with a first-professional degree in Landscape Architecture; and
3. **Current Students** enrolled in a first-professional degree in Landscape Architecture.

To ensure wide representation of the community of interest, accredited Programs are invited to nominate at least one landscape architecture academic. Similarly, each AILA Chapter is encouraged to nominate at least one practitioner. AILA will seek nominations from other sources. AILA NEC will review nominations for NART and make appointments to the list. Appointments are for five years and are renewable. NART membership is not dependent on a member retaining status in one of these three categories for the five year team or for on-going renewals. Information on file for all NART members includes current location, school affiliations and previous visits, as well as a resume.

Visiting Team Selection

The Visiting Team consists of two landscape architecture academics, two practicing landscape architects and one student. The composition of each Visiting Team must also provide a broad representation from landscape architecture with a diversity of backgrounds, knowledge and skills. For a review, the NEC Chair selects a Visiting Team from the NART and designates one member as the Visiting Team Chair.

Visiting Teams are selected to avoid potential conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest may be a recent affiliation with the Program under review, or an affiliation with a Program in the same State or Territory. This would make a member ineligible. The NEC Chair may widen the definitions of the categories to provide the required numbers of members from each of the three categories. This would occur:

- When NART membership has insufficient available members to provide the required numbers of

- members for each of the three categories represented in the Visiting Team;
- To more equitably spread the responsibilities across the NART membership and not rely too heavily on a small group of NART members to provide their expertise to more than one or two Visiting Teams in a five year term; or
 - When particular NART members have specific knowledge and skills required for a Visiting Team.

The Program is advised of the proposed Visiting Team members, including each member's current position, experience and areas of expertise. The Program has the right to challenge a maximum of one Visiting Team member, with cause. For the purpose of challenge, conflict of interest can be cited if the nominee is affiliated with a competitor university or if they have had a previous affiliation with the university, or if the university can demonstrate that the nominee is not competent to evaluate the Program. However, the final decision on team composition rests with the NEC Chair.

Pre-Visit Responsibilities: Program

The AILA NEC Chair, after conferring with the Visiting Team and the university, schedules the dates for the accreditation visit. AILA is responsible for arrangements and the cost of travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the visiting NART.

Following the Program's review of the NART nominees, the NART nominees are invited to serve. When the NART composition and date of the review are finalized, the NART and the Program are formally notified. Any subsequent changes in NART makeup because of scheduling conflicts or emergencies are made by the NEC Chair in consultation with the Program.

Observer Responsibilities during NART Visits

Observers may participate in Visiting Team discussions as invited by the Team Chair. For example, a prospective Visiting Team member may be invited to serve as an observer as an apprenticeship for a future accreditation visit, and may be asked to participate in reviews of student work and ask questions during the Visit that a member of the Visiting Team would typically ask. However, the goal of the observer is to prepare to be a future team member.

Pre-Visit Responsibilities: Visiting Team

The Visiting Team Chair is responsible for making assignments and assembling the NART post-visit report. Team members receive the *AILA Accreditation Standards and Procedures* and the *AILA Guidelines for National Accreditation Visiting Team Members* and are expected to be thoroughly familiar with these documents before the accreditation visit. Each Visiting Team member must carefully review the Self-Evaluation Report and carry out assignments as the Team Chair directs.

Sample Accreditation Visit Schedule

The following is a sample schedule of activities for a Visiting Team. This includes all necessary meetings on campus and allows time for drafting the final report. The schedule may be varied by the Program Director, in consultation with AILA NEC Chair, prior to the finalisation of the travel arrangements for the Visiting Team. Minor variations to the schedule may be made by consultation between the Program Director and the Visiting Team Chair.

Day 1 (Sunday)	
12:00-2:00pm	Team arrival
2:00-6:00pm	Initial review of exhibition of student work (at this stage need to ascertain if there is sufficient work on display)
6:00pm	Visiting Team meets with Program Director to finalise the schedule and discuss the itinerary for the visit. This is an opportunity to raise any immediate concerns eg if not sufficient work on display.
8:00pm	Visiting Team session: Confirm Team member assignments and plan how the Team will conduct interviews and meetings that will take place during the visit.
Day 2 (Monday)	
7:30am	Breakfast with Program Director
9:30am	Meet with the Landscape Architecture Program Director (eg Head of School and/or Associate Dean/Education, or equivalent)
10:00am	Brief tour of the landscape architecture facilities.
10:30am	Discussion of curriculum with Program academics. Review of how the Program accomplishes its mission through the delivery of the curriculum including a review of student work from each class and sequence of courses. The Team has the opportunity to clarify any questions arising in the pre-visit documentation.
12.30pm	Lunch with recent graduates and local practitioners to be arranged at the discretion of the Visiting Team and Program Director. Opportunity to evaluate graduates' satisfaction with the educational process and how well the Program has prepared them to perform professional entry-level functions.
1:30pm	Interviews with students and academic staff. Student interviews may be conducted with students grouped by year. It is recommended that student interviews take place before academic staff interviews. Interviews with academic staff may be a series of individual interviews to discuss impressions of the Program (strengths, weaknesses, university input, university development) or group interviews, if preferred by the Program Director and the Visiting Team.
3:00pm	Inspection of library and other supporting facilities eg, computing centre, workshop(s), special services, etc.
3:30pm	Meet with the Senior Staff of the university (Vice-Chancellor, Deputy V-C Academic, Faculty Dean as appropriate).
4.00pm	Visiting Team meets in private to review and discuss the day's activities, look again at the student work.
7:30pm	Visiting Team has dinner and a session to review findings, begin to complete the report and prepare comments for the morning feedback session.
Day 3 (Tuesday)	
8:00am	Visiting Team meets in a final working session to outline the findings that will be presented and discussed throughout the morning.
10.00am	Visiting Team reviews findings with the Faculty Dean, immediate supervisor (or equivalent) of the Landscape Architecture Program Director.
10.30am	Visiting Team meets with the Landscape Architecture Program Director and academic staff to report back and discuss findings.
12.00pm	Visiting Team departs.

The Program Director prepares the schedule for the Accreditation visit and forwards it to the NEC Chair, along with the SER, at least 30 business days prior to the visit, whereupon the NEC Chair distributes it to the Visiting Team members. The recommended schedule includes interviews with students, academic staff and university officials, as well as alumni and local practitioners.

Visiting Team members may conduct interviews by telephone with persons who are unable to meet with them on campus, such as graduates, practitioners or academic staff on leave. A university senior management representative should be interviewed during the Team's visit. Early inspection of space and facilities and an exhibit of work produced by students in the Program are vital. There should be no evening events, as the Visiting Team needs this time to work on its report and prepare for the next day.

Visiting Team Report

During the visit, the Visiting Team members meet in private to prepare a complete report in draft form and to decide on an advisory recommendation to AILA NEC on the Program's accreditation status. The content of this report, except the advisory recommendation, is discussed with the university senior management representative as well as the Program Director.

The Guidelines document includes a format for the Visiting Team's report designed to cover all the AILA requirements and accreditation Standards. The Visiting Team Chair is responsible for compiling the report.

Within ten business days following the visit, the Visiting Team Chair completes final editing and sends copies to the other Visiting Team members and the AILA NEC Chair who review the report. The report may be edited for grammar, spelling and style. The Visiting Team members should send any comments to the AILA NEC Chair. Any substantive changes or additions will be referred to the Team Chair and may result in re-distributing the report to the Visiting Team for further review.

Program Response

Within ten business days of the receipt of the Visiting Team report, the NEC Chair shall send copies to the Program Director for their comment and for accuracy of matters of fact. Within fifteen business days following receipt of the report, the university shall submit its response (substantive comments and corrections) to the AILA NEC Chair. The Program Director shall respond to any Standard that is assessed as "met with recommendation(s)" or "not met". This response should include any additional documentation the Program Director deems pertinent.

The report and Program Response are sent to the AILA NEC members at least three weeks before the next scheduled NEC meeting.

AILA Review & Decision

The accreditation review decision will take place at the next scheduled AILA NEC meeting. The NEC may consult with a member of the Visiting Team (usually the Chair) and/or the Program Director in order to clarify items in the team report or Program Response.

The Program Director may request to appear before the NEC to discuss a pending accreditation decision. The NEC's decision will be based upon the Program's Self-Evaluation Report, annual reports, Visiting Team report and university response.

Any adverse accreditation decision, defined as either "accreditation denial" or "withdrawal of accreditation" will be substantiated with specific reasons and the Program Director will be notified of their right to appeal any such decision (see **Appeal Process**). A Program which has not been granted accredited status, or a Program from which accreditation has been withdrawn, may reapply for

accreditation when the Program Director believes the Program meets current requirements.

Accreditation is granted for a period of one to five years. A Program Director may apply for an accreditation review at any time before its term expires (at its own expense), but may not defer a visit to extend its term.

AILA Actions

AILA can take the following actions:

Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation

Accreditation (or Preliminary Accreditation) is granted when all Standards are “met” or when one or more Standards are “met with recommendation(s)” and continued overall Program quality and conformance to Standards are judged likely to be maintained.

Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation may be granted up to five (5) years.

Preliminary Accreditation granted to a Program with Accreditation may be for a period of up to two (2) years.

Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation are not subject to appeal.

A Program receiving Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation may be required to submit special progress reports.

Suspension of Accreditation

This status results if a Program fails to maintain good standing for administrative reasons. Suspension of accreditation is not subject to appeal.

Accreditation Denial

This status results when one or more Standards are not met. This determination is subject to appeal.

Withdrawal of Accreditation

This status results if a Program fails to comply with accreditation Standards. This determination is subject to appeal.

Notification of AILA Action

The university is officially notified of AILA's action in writing. Copies are sent to the Program Director, relevant university senior management representative and the Visiting Team members.

The AILA retains a copy of a Program's two most recent Self-Evaluation Reports and associated documents.

Confidentiality

AILA treats all material generated by the Program and AILA for accreditation as confidential. However, AILA encourages the widest dissemination of all accreditation materials within the university. The Visiting Team report is considered to be the property of AILA. AILA reserves the right to release a complete report should the university release a portion of the Visiting Team report that might, in the judgment of the AILA, present a biased or distorted view of the Visiting Team findings.

Reference to Accredited Status

A Program's accredited status must be clearly conveyed in all applicable Program and university literature.

Delaying a Scheduled Accreditation Visit

From time to time a Program Director may want to delay a scheduled accreditation visit because of unexpected circumstances. AILA will grant a site visit delay for up to one year if the following conditions are met:

- The Program received a five year term of accreditation at its last review;
- The Program is in compliance with Minimum Requirements for achieving and maintaining accredited status; and
- All fees and required reports have been submitted.

To approve a delay, AILA must receive a request in writing from a university senior management representative. If the request for delay is received after Visiting Team selection has commenced, the Program must reimburse any visit-related expenses that have been incurred (such as non-refundable airline tickets).

A delayed visit cannot be postponed again for any reason.

Rescheduling Visit

When the visit is rescheduled, priority for selecting visit dates will be determined by the NEC Chair in consultation with the Program's Director.

Term of Accreditation

When AILA advises on the Accreditation outcome, the grant of accreditation will begin from the originally scheduled review date.

Interim Review

Depending on the number of years granted in the term of accreditation, the NEC will advise the timing of an interim review, recommended as halfway through the term, for the purpose of providing follow up on any issues of concern and/or changes in the Program that may have arisen. The NEC will assemble a team of approximately three people to carry out this interim review which will typically require no more than a one-day visit with the Program Director and academic staff. Interim visits would not normally require completion of the SER, student work display, and other items normally included in an accreditation visit.

Annual Report

Ongoing accreditation is subject to the accredited Program submitting an annual report to allow AILA to monitor the Program's continuing compliance with accreditation requirements. This report shall comply with the *AILA Annual Report* template. AILA will alert the Program Director, in the first instance, if there are any concerns arising from the annual report.

Other Reports

From time to time, AILA may request a Program Director to prepare a special report to explain or describe a certain issue or problem.

Policy on Substantive Change

In order to support accredited Programs in being able to make changes between accreditation visits, AILA will offer consultative reviews of proposed changes prior to submission of an official request for

Substantive Change. A Substantive Change may comprise significant changes to an existing accredited Program, i.e. a change of more than 20% in any of the following:

- The mode of delivery;
- The underpinning philosophy of the Program;
- The content of the subjects within a Program;
- Human, physical and financial resources; and/or
- Any other substantial change to the Program.

Any such change is one that could compromise a Program's ability to meet one or more of the Standards approved and published, or that makes a Program unable to meet the Minimum Requirements for maintaining accredited status (as included in the *Accreditation Standards and Procedures*). A Substantive Change shall be included in annual reports but direct consultation with the NEC is encouraged prior to the Substantive Change. Primary responsibility for reporting Substantive Change rests with the Program Director.

Maintaining Accreditation

To maintain accreditation, a Program must continuously meet the minimum requirements for achieving and maintaining accredited status. AILA must be informed if any of these requirements cannot be met during an accreditation period.

Withdrawal of Accreditation

Should a Program fail to comply with Accreditation Standards, accreditation may be withdrawn. Before withdrawing accreditation, AILA will make all reasonable efforts to engage with the Program to understand the reasons behind issues and ask the Program Director to explain why accreditation should not be withdrawn.

Accreditation Fees

NEC reviews Accreditation fees, in line with the *Accreditation Standards and Procedures*, every five years. AILA National Council approval is required to adopt any fee changes.

APPEAL PROCESS

When AILA takes adverse action on accreditation, specific reasons shall be provided for that action to the Program Director and the Vice Chancellor of the University. Adverse actions include denial or withdrawal of accreditation.

Recipients of adverse action shall be advised of their right to appeal. An appeal must be based on whether AILA and/or the Visiting Team conformed to the accreditation standards and procedures as described in this document.

If appeals are based on challenges to accreditation standards or procedures, they will be dismissed. Universities differing with AILA on the standards and procedures established in this document are invited to contact AILA's NEC which regularly reviews the standards.

A written notice of appeal signed by the Program Director must be submitted within twenty business days of AILA's written notification. The appeal must be sent to the AILA National Office, which shall notify the Chair of the NEC. The Program Director must submit within forty business days of AILA's action a "comprehensive written statement" of all the reasons for the appeal. Failure to submit this statement within forty business days of notice of AILA's action is equivalent to withdrawing the appeal.

During the appeal period, the accredited status of the Program prior to the adverse action will not change. The record of the appeal upon which the appeal is based shall be limited to the material presented to AILA's Visiting Team at its scheduled meeting from which the final accreditation report consisting of the written notification from AILA is issued.

Appeal Panel

AILA's NEC shall appoint an Appeal Panel of three persons, including its chair. Each person must have knowledge of and experience with the accreditation of educational institutions or programs. The Panel members should be:

- The NEC Chair;
- One NART member (who was not engaged as a Visiting Team member to the appealing university); and
- A National Councillor (who is not sitting on the NEC), or if this is not possible, then the AILA National President to nominate a senior practitioner (AILA member).

Authority

The Appeal Panel, by concurrence of a majority of the Panel members, may either affirm AILA's decision or recommend to AILA that it reconsider the decision. AILA must review the case if the Appeal Panel recommends reconsideration of the decision. Reasonable scheduling is at the discretion of AILA. The final decision on accreditation rests with AILA.

The Appeal Panel may promulgate additional rules of procedure for the scheduling and conduct of hearings, provided they are consistent with these procedures. The Appeal Panel has no jurisdiction or authority over the reasonableness of the accreditation standards and procedures, which is a matter properly in the exclusive jurisdiction of AILA.

No adverse action is published until the resolution of any appeal.

Hearing of Appeal

The Chair of the Appeal Panel designates the time and place of the hearing which takes place no later than forty business days after receipt of the Program's comprehensive written statement. The Chair of the Appeal Panel presides at the hearing and rules on all procedural matters. All three members of the Appeal Panel must be present.

Both the University and AILA may submit briefs before the hearing in a manner prescribed by the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will review the documents that AILA had at the time it made its original decision:

- Visiting Team report,
- Self-Evaluation Report, and
- Program Response.

The hearing shall be as informal as is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. A party may appear by or with counsel or other representative. The University may waive personal appearance, in which case the matter will be decided solely on briefs and the written statement. The final decision on accreditation rests with AILA.

Decision of the Appeal Panel

Every decision must have the concurrence of a majority of the Appeal Panel members. Within thirty business days after the conclusion of the hearing, the Appeal Panel shall issue a written decision stating its reasons and recommendations, if any, to AILA. The decision will indicate the members of the Appeal Panel concurring. Dissenting opinions may be filed. AILA will furnish the majority decision with dissenting opinions, if any, to the University.

If the Appeal Panel affirms AILA's original decision, there is no further remedy available within these procedures.

If the Appeal Panel recommends reconsideration of the decision, the determination thereafter by AILA shall be final.

Expenses of the Appeal Hearing

The Program will bear the following expenses in connection with the appeal:

1. Travel and subsistence for the Appeal Panel members, and
2. Cost of the hearing room.

PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY

AILA accredited Programs are required to provide reliable information to the public. Programs must report on accreditation status and its performance where appropriate in relation to their Program marketing. This information is to help potential students make informed application decisions.

Information shall appear in easily accessible locations on Program websites. Information must include, but is not limited to:

1. Student achievements as determined by the Program.
2. The cost (tuition and fees) for a full-time student for one academic year, estimated housing costs per year, and average costs of books and materials per year.
3. Student retention and graduation rates, including the number of degrees produced each year, the percentage of Master's students graduating within four years, and/or the percentage of Bachelor's students graduating within six years (the years given are examples). Programs can select time frames relevant to their circumstances.

Programs are encouraged to report information that may be helpful to the public such as:

- Employment of graduates,
- Success in gaining registration,
- Graduate school acceptance rates,
- Alumni survey results,
- Student demographics, and
- Accreditation reports.